

# **Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee**

**Tuesday, March 21, 2017**

**Archie R. Cole Middle School Cafetorium**

**100 Cedar Avenue**

**East Greenwich, RI 02818**

**5:45 p.m. Executive Session, Mrs. Winters made a motion at 5:47 p.m. to go into executive session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under Rhode Island General Laws §42-46-4 and §42-46-5 (a) (2) Paraprofessional Negotiations, Teacher Negotiations, (a) (3) School Safety. Mr. Plain seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.**

**Those in attendance were Ms. Carolyn Mark, Chair; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters, Vice-Chair; Mr. Matt Plain; Mr. Michael Fain (arrived 5:49 p.m.); Mr. Jeff Dronzek; Dr. Lori McEwen; and Dr. Yan Sun. Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration; Mr. Bradley Wilson, Director of Student Services; and Attorney Matthew Oliverio were also in attendance.**

## **7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting**

### **I. Call to Order**

**Ms. Mark called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m.**

### **II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

**The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**

### **III. Public Comments**

Emily Miga, EGHS senior, discussed the impact and division that work-to-rule is having on EGHS students. Mrs. Botaro voiced concerns regarding the effect work-to-rule is having in her son's classroom at Frenchtown. She was scheduled to read in the classroom, but the teacher has since cancelled this opportunity. Mrs. Botaro requested that teachers do not use class time to make public statements. Mr. Adam Scott, Cole Teacher, discussed his history with the district (18 years) and his love for his school and the well being of East Greenwich. He asked the Committee to remember the impact teachers have on their students.

### **IV. Approval of Minutes**

#### **a. Regular and Executive for February 28, 2017**

On a motion by Mr. Plain, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the regular and executive minutes. Mrs. Winters abstained.

#### **b. Budget Workshop for March 2, 2017**

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Dronzek, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the budget workshop minutes.

#### **c. Regular and Executive for March 7, 2017**

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the regular and executive minutes. Dr. Sun abstained.

### **V. Superintendent's Report**

#### **a. Rhode Island Interscholastic Athletic Administrator's Association**

Mr. Cobain was named R.I. Interscholastic Athletic Administrator of

the year. The R.I.I.A. awards take place on April 3rd. A formal recognition will take place at the School Committee meeting on April 4th.

**b. Wilfred Berube Award for Administrative Excellence**

Mrs. Cauley is the recipient of the Wilfred Berube Award for Administrative Excellence. She will also be recognized at the April 4th School Committee meeting.

**c. Surveyworks**

The window for the survey closes March 31st. Principals' will send reminders to parents. Ms. Mark asked if Dr. Mercurio could provide updates after professional development to let the Committee know what happened on the PD Day and what is scheduled for the future.

**VI. Action Items**

**a. Appointment**

**1. Head Coach Softball-Cole-Vernon Lawrence**

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. Sun, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the appointment.

**b. Parental leave request-Mary Smith, Music Teacher, Eldredge/Hanaford**

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Plain, the Committee voted

7-0 to approve the parental leave.

**c. Safe Schools Gun Resolution: Second Read/Possible Adoption**

Ms. Mark read through the resolution at the last meeting. This resolution will close a loophole and allow only police officers to carry firearms on school property. Ms. Barbara Horitz-Brown, 538 Middle

Road, expressed concerns about guns in schools and shared statistics on gun laws. On a motion by Mr. Plain, which was seconded by Dr. McEwen, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the resolution.

**d. School Calendar 2017-2018: Second Read/Possible Adoption**

Mr. Dronzek questioned whether half day PD days are included in this calendar. Dr. Mercurio said that could be up for discussion for the 2018-19 school year. This involves discussion with bargaining units. Mr. Plain clarified the rationale for non-school days on Good Friday and Rosh Hashanah. Good Friday is listed as an observed holiday in one of the bargaining units. Rosh Hashanah is a non-school day due to the excessive absenteeism that would occur if the district held school. On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Dronzek, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the 2017- 2018 school calendar.

**VII. Advisory/Subcommittee Updates**

**a. Personnel Committee**

Dr. McEwen summarized the meeting that took place on March 9th. The group looked at updates for policies. Some will need review by district counsel. A purpose statement will be added to all policies. The superintendent's evaluation will be tied to leadership standards. Dr. Mercurio shared some tools that are currently being used across the country. A workshop may be needed so the Committee understands the standards.

There was also discussion about the Committee's effectiveness and how that could be measured. The exit interview process was also

discussed. The employee manual was reviewed. Quick links to policies were added. The table of contents for the employee manual was reviewed and additional changes made. Rose Emilio, Gail Wilcox, and Chris DiMeglio were thanked for their work. The group discussed creating a full portal for staff (similar to JWU). This is being explored with the town. The next meeting is April 6th.

#### **b. Health and Wellness Committee**

The last meeting took place on March 15th. Mrs. Cauley was thanked for hosting the meeting. She also provided updates on the health/wellness happenings at Hanaford.

RIDE sent feedback on the school meals audit. RIDE and the USDA were excited to hear about the lunch box program. The group discussed uniformity of physical activity at the elementary schools. Health and Wellness opportunities with the PTGs were discussed at the meeting. An end of the year wellness assessment is not due until the close of the 2017-18 school year.

#### **c. Mental Health Subcommittee**

The last meeting took place on March 13th. Ms. Bradshaw was thanked for her efforts to book Screenagers at Cole. About 130 people attended. Ms. Mark will draft a summary of the experience and post some links in the Supt's Field Memo. The group is brainstorming ideas for Mental Health Awareness Month (May). The group continues to discuss the insertion of mental health into the health curriculum. A bill is pending in the General Assembly to include mental health in the curriculum.

### **VIII. Discussion**

#### **a. Fund Balance Update**

**Mrs. Wilcox reviewed the fund balance and revenue pages. She highlighted the ending fund balance 2015 (\$3,666,961) and 2016 (\$3,991,947). The potential FY2017 projected deficit overage from fund balance \$1,327,070 was also discussed. The fund balance available for withdrawal was reviewed (\$859,955), along with the residual balance (\$1,295,780). Projected revenue was also discussed. The current ask is at 8.60%, which is higher than the statute of 4%.**

#### **b. FY2018 Budget/Timeline**

**Dr. Mercurio provided slides with fund balance updates, revenue projections, current enrollment, projected enrollment, and potential reductions. Potential reductions drafted by Dr. Mercurio/administrative council were reviewed. All potential reductions are attached to staff. Reductions started as far away from the classroom and moved inward. These reductions total \$990,300. The Committee discussed items that are the farthest away (video taping of meetings, etc.). Dr. Mercurio discussed the implications of cutting capital improvement. Cuts in Athletic programs were also discussed. Dr. Mercurio said the two most expensive sports with the lowest number of students are swimming and hockey. Mr. Dronzek explained that the athletic budget is \$600,000 and is the only department that generates revenue.**

**The Committee discussed several potential areas to look for cuts (tiers of transportation, paraprofessionals, new positions, etc.). Ms.**

Mark would like the district to do a programmatic assessment to look at participation, outcomes, etc. Dr. Mercurio said the district does not have a lot of wiggle room unless the master schedule is reconfigured at the high school. Mr. Fain asked that the district look at \$2.25 million in cuts and determine what is realistic. Several community members voiced their concerns over the budget cuts. Bus transportation opt-in was discussed, along with policy changes and questions about housing.

The next budget workshop will take place on March 28th. Dr. Mercurio will provide cuts up to \$2.25 million with details for each cut. Mr. Plain thanked Dr. Mercurio and the administrative team for working so quickly (within 2 business days) to provide the cuts presented this evening.

#### **c. IT Governance**

The IT Governance Council has been established and the ordinance adopted by the Town Council. The School Committee's concerns were addressed and there is equal representation on both sides. If there are any issues regarding the implementation, the Town Council is open to hearing those concerns. The timeline has not been set. There will be an opportunity for members of the public serve on the committee.

#### **d. R.I. Regulations 300.900 (Local Advisory Committee on Special Education)/East**

##### **Greenwich Local Advisory Committee Bylaws**

Mr. Plain thanked SEAC members for their hard work, attendance at

meetings, and their active participation as SEAC members. Mr. Plain reminded all that the Committee is obligated to engage the special education community and reminded them of the requirement to include them as a “body.” Mr. Plain read through regulation #300.900.

Membership, function/responsibilities, duties, notification, etc. were reviewed. Mr. Wilson was thanked for reviving the SEAC. Mr. Plain would like the School Committee to have a more formal role with SEAC. Perhaps a member could serve on SEAC on a rotating basis. Mr. Plain also discussed the membership, which is supposed to include a special education teacher and regular education teacher. The next SEAC meeting is tomorrow night. Ms. Mark and Mr. Plain will discuss fulfilling the regulatory duties.

#### **IX. School Committee Concerns/Important Matters Pending**

No items were discussed.

#### **X. Adjournment**

On a motion by Dr. McEwen, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn at 9:19 p.m.

**CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO**

**SECRETARY**